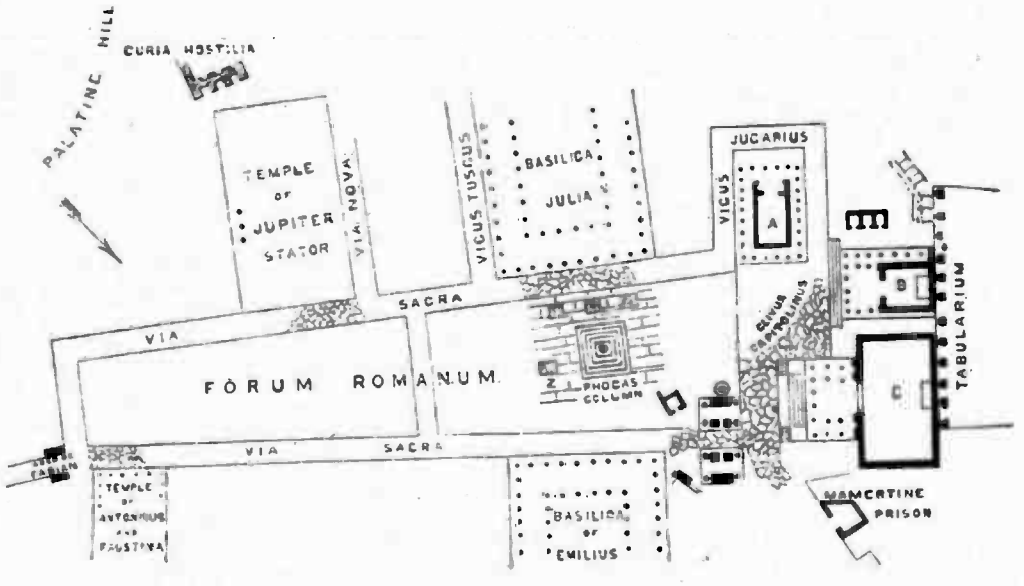
SKETCH PLAN, FORUM ROMANUM.



have said the width; but within the last quarter of a century, the German antiquaries and architects, led on by the great name of Niebuhr, and followed up by the learned diligence of Bunsen, have unanimously returned to the opinion of the old antiquaries.

Vitruvius informs us that the Greeks made their fora square, with wide and double porticoes, but in the cities of Italy, he adds, they were of a different form, on account of the gladiatorial shows which custom had introduced into them. They ought not to be made, he says, too large, so that a crowd would appear lost in them, nor too small for the population; and the length should be in proportion to the width as three to two:* this proportion, however, was not always observed, for the Forum of Pompeii is only one-third of its length in width; but still we may infer that if the Roman Forum had differed from those proportions laid down by Vitruvius, he would at least have remarked the circumstance: it is therefore fair to conclude that the Roman Forum was a rectangular space in the Vitruvian proportions. Now, to apply them to the ground, it should be observed, that between the Arch of Severus and the supposed site of the Arch of Fabian, is a distance of about 400 feet: if this be taken for the length of the Forum, then 270 feet across for the width will bring us near the large brick fabric supposed to be the Curia, and the rectangle completed will join the Clivus Capitolinus just behind the Temple of the eight columns. If on the other hand 400 feet be the width, then the Forum will be laid out according to the doctrine of Nardini, that is to say, it will be a rectangular space about a diagonal drawn from the Arch of Septimius Severus to the Church of S. Teodoro. I have already said that the first is now the favourite theory of the Germans. The Italian antiquaries have not yet relinquished the second, but Canina (whose plan is now before you), an architect, but not an archæologist, appears to agree mainly with the Germans. The numerous passages cited by all parties from ancient authors have, of course, been applied according to every one's theory: it is not my intention to trouble you with many of these, but rather to see how the modern excavations may be cited to bear evidence upon the subject. The important discovery of the Basilica Julia will throw great light upon the limits of the Forum, but this object must be taken in connection with the adjacent Clivus Capitolinus, and therefore I proposed as the next step in our argument to call your attention to the three temples whose remains will be familiar to every one who has visited Rome. Those temples are marked upon the plan A, B, C. C is the Temple of Concord, about which there is no longer any dispute. There were found in 1817 several inscriptions amongst its ruins with the word Concordia, and happy it is that the temple of such a goddess should afford no matter of discord, even "where her altars are no more divine." The other two have, however, frequently changed their appellation, and are yet destined to undergo more changes. A, with the eight granite columns, still standing, had usurped the name of Concord ever since 1431, when Poggio Bracciolini saw it nearly perfect in the last days of Pope Eugenius. That learned Florentine ascended the Capitoline Hill with a friend, and sitting down on the ruins of the Tarpeian citadel, he moralised on the vicissitudes of all human things, and has left his reflections in a book entitled "De Varietate Fortunæ." "The Forum of the Roman People," he says, "where they assembled to enact their laws and elect their magistrates, is now enclosed for the cultivation of pot-herbs, or thrown open for the reception of swine and buffaloes. The public and private edifices that were founded for eternity lie prostrate, naked, and broken, like the limbs of a mighty giant, and the ruin is the more visible from the stupendous relics that have survived the injuries of time and fortune." The description which the learned Tuscan then gives of the ruins shows that a moralist and an antiquary are not always combined in the same person, and among other rash conjectures upon the names of the ruins he saw, he fixed that of *Concord* upon the eight columns on the Clivus, the site of the Temple of Concord being, however, discovered, as I have already intimated. His own goddess, Fortune, succeeded to the honours, by common consent, of the Roman Ciceroni. Fortune, however, has her day, and what could this goddess expect but vicissitudes, who had herself brought vicissitudes on so many of her votaries. She has of late years been obliged to yield up her honours again to Vespasian; but Vespasian must yield again, according to the German theory, if Canina is right, to a god no less venerable than old Saturn himself. The three columns which remain of the temple marked B. have long been invested with the title of Jupiter Tonans.

The origin of the thundering Jove is this. Augustus, during his expedition in Spain, was travelling one stormy night, when the litter in which he was conveyed was struck by lightning, and the slave carrying the torch before him was killed on the spot. The emperor, grateful for his narrow escape, vowed a temple to the master of the thunderbolt: it was built, according to the expression of Suetonius, on the Capitol, *in Capitolio*. Dion Cassius describes it as occurring in the ascent to the Capitol. Pliny, who often mentions it, says it was on the Capitol. Publius Victor, in the fifth century, says it was on the Clivus. It is exhibited on a medal extant, with six columns in front; and the statue of the god, which was a *chef-d'œuvre* of Leocars, is represented standing in the midst. As soon as the temple was erected, the worship of Jupiter Tonans, out of compliment to the emperor, became very popular,—so much so, as to cause inconvenience about the passage: it was considered desirable to turn the tide in another direction: for this purpose Augustus had a dream: Jupiter Capitolinus appeared to the emperor asleep, and complained that he had taken away all his worshippers by setting up a rival Jupiter: the emperor consoled the Optimus Maximus Jove, by assuring him that he intended Tonans to be nothing more than a porter's lodge to his Capitoline majesty; and shortly after he put bells upon the pediment, to show that it was a mere entrance. Now all this would appear to take Jupiter Tonans higher up the hill than the three angular columns, and I conceive we are at liberty to make some changes among these imperial deities. I shall this evening have to remove the Thunderer from the place he has usurped, and set Vespasian in possession of his honours. You will now very naturally require that I should produce my reasons. It is the custom among the Roman antiquaries, before they proceed to deliver their own opinions, and give their proofs and reasons for them, to summon up one by one the opinions of antagonists, and dispose of them as mere dreams, or as the baseless fabric of a vision. I should not have time, nor you patience, to allow of proceeding after that manner, but I shall be content with stating why I think the three columns called Jupiter Tonans ought to be called the Temple of Vespasian, and the eight columns, commonly called the Temple of Fortune, should belong to the Temple of Saturn.

Mabillon found a MS. in the Convent of Einsiedlen, in Switzerland, which has turned out to be one of the most valuable documents to the Roman antiquary of any that time has spared. It bears no name, but appears to have been the faithful record of a pilgrimage of a pious German or Swiss who visited Rome in the eighth century. To perform his devotions according to the prescribed canons of those days, he visited all the seven Basilicæ, and in going from one to the other registered every building and inscription that came in

* Latitudo autem ita finietur, uti longitudo in tres partes quæ divisa fuerit, ex his duæ partes ei dentur.—Lib. V. c. 1.

For info on OCR and PDF Compression go to our website